

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 1-52 and 62-80 are allowed and that claims 54-61 would be allowable if amended into independent form.

Prior Art Rejections

A. U.S. Patent No. 4,589,642

Claim 53 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,589,642 to Schnelle et al. (hereinafter "Schnelle"). Schnelle discloses an operating table including a hydraulic lifting apparatus 18. The lifting apparatus 18 includes two antiparallel lifting cylinders 26, 28 arranged next to one another, connected in parallel with one another, and having similar cross sections. The piston rod 30 of one cylinder is connected with the column head 16 and the piston rod 32 of the other cylinder is connected with the column foot 14. The pressure fluid supply and exhaust for the lifting apparatus 18 takes place through the piston rod 30 connected with the column head 16.

1. Claim 53

Schnelle fails to teach or suggest "a fluid system directly coupled to each of the first and second pistons to supply pressurized fluid to the housing, the fluid system being external to the housing" as recited in amended claim 53. In the rejection, the Examiner stated, "The connectors 62, 64 and the pumping and control circuit as shown in Figures 8 and 9 form a fluid system that operates the pistons which is mounted externally of the blocks." Connectors 62, 64 are coupled to piston rod 30. The external fluid system is not directly coupled to the second piston rod 32. Therefore, Schnelle fails to teach "a fluid system directly coupled to each of the first and second pistons to supply pressurized fluid to the housing, the fluid system being external to the housing." Applicants respectfully submit that claim 53 patentably defines the invention over Schnelle and request removal of rejection.

Final Comments

All of the objected to claims have been placed in independent form or depend from an allowed claim. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowance in due course. If necessary, the Examiner is asked to call Applicants' attorney to address any outstanding issues to expedite the prosecution of this application for all parties.

If necessary, Applicants request that this Response be considered a request for an extension of time for a time appropriate for the response to be timely filed. Applicants request that any required fees needed beyond those submitted with this Response be charged to the account of Bose McKinney & Evans, Deposit Account Number 02-3223.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ryan C. Barker", is written over a horizontal line.

Ryan C. Barker

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